

The Difference Between by dead-night-harringrove (familiarFlames)

Series: [Siren Steve: Tumblr Drabbles \[2\]](#)

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PROMPT: Siren Steve making Billy his consort and doing everything to win him over, like bringing him jewels and other gifts from the sea.

The Difference Between

It starts simply enough. Billy always walks the beach after he and Neil get into a fight. The waves rushing against his legs and pulling away at the sand beneath his feet always have a soothing effect on his spirit, and when the sun sets against the horizon and casts his world into gold and crimson hues, he feels whole. His life is meant for the ocean, and sometimes he dreams of following the pull of the undertow and giving it to Her.

He walks until he can no longer hear the sound of music and street bands from the boardwalk. He walks until he reaches his destination: an abandoned fishing pier that he likes to sit below. A good place for reflection. When he ducks under the pier, he's not surprised but still confused when he sees there's been a gift left beneath it. It's a gold medallion, and it looks to be some 500 years old. There's dried seaweed tangled in its chain, and he holds it up, dangling in the dying sun. It casts out little circles of light that wave as it swings gently in the sea breeze. Billy tucks it into his pocket, staring out over the ocean. He can swear he sees a shark's fin breach the surface further out, but it's far too large to be any shark that would dare come so close to the shore. It's gone before he can think anymore about it.

The medallion isn't the first gift left there in the past few weeks. Billy wonders if they're actually meant for him. Probably not, but he can't help feeling like they are. He's collected pearls, gold coins, quartz crystals, a strangely pretty orange rock, and necklaces from eras long passed. Once, there was even a pile of diamond rings left in his hiding spot. He's been trading them in at the pawn shop a few miles from his house, creating a savings to get himself and Max out of that house.

Billy finds another gift the next week, and the week after that, and one day he decides to stay. He hides himself above the fishing pier, laying down as far inland as he can be so it doesn't collapse and deposit him directly into the ocean. It truly is that old; he's never seen it used in his seventeen years of life.

He waits, stretched out on his belly, for so long that he ends up

falling asleep.

He snaps awake when he hears something below the pier moving, and he looks down through the cracks in the boards and gasps. The figure below the pier freezes, and Billy scrambles back when suddenly there's a huge golden eye staring right into his own blues. He stands as quickly as he can, prepared and ready to run when he moves to the side to look beneath the pier. He expected a *person* or even a gull to be responsible for the weird shiny treasures left beneath his hiding place. Not whatever the fuck *that* thing is. It looks like a twisted, evil mermaid. It's got a shark's tail, but it's far larger than any shark he's ever seen. Not to mention the stripes adorning the massive tail trail upward to a distinctly human torso. Billy's eyes find the creature's as he looks up. It's got beautiful eyes, that transition from deep brown to hazel to an almost ethereal gold when it moves its head.

The beast makes to move towards him, and Billy scrambles backwards and turns to run. He slips in the sand, and if he hadn't fallen he would have missed the almost hurt keen the monster behind him lets out. Billy pulls himself back onto his ass, so he's facing it. The thing has a dejected look on its face, and it's slowly pushing itself back into the water as it keeps its eyes on Billy. He doesn't like how sad it looks, and glancing over to where he usually sits, he sees there's a green crystal of some sort that wasn't there when he'd walked down to the pier hours ago.

"Wait!" he shouts before he can stop himself, and the creature stops its depart. Its wide eyes rest on Billy, who wills himself to move towards it. He walks closer, hesitant because the thing in front of him can quite clearly kill him. It doesn't make any moves to do so, however, and Billy sits down in front of it. How *giant*. Billy could probably be picked up with its hands like a burger. Maybe he should stop thinking of it referring to him as food, though, if he wants to quit panicking.

"Have you been, ah, is this for- for me?" he asks, picking up the crystal and looking at it instead of the shark-human hybrid in front of him.

"Yes. I'm sorry, for scaring you..." Its voice sounds sad, and Billy

looks up at it. It, *he*, is beautiful, though. Beautiful, in the same way natural sharks are. Powerful and terrifying, but beautiful.

“It’s okay! I mean, I guess I just wasn’t expecting to see a giant shark mermaid instead of a seagull or another human,” Billy says, and he’s not sure what he says *wrong* but the creature’s eyes narrow wickedly and he feels his heart rate spike just as soon as he was finally getting it down. He seems to register Billy’s fear though, and frowns apologetically.

“I did it again... I don’t want to hurt you. I’m not a mermaid though. I’m a Siren. Mermaids are obnoxious and dim, and there are very few I can stand being around. Those few are more like sirens, though, in my opinion far too smart to be mermaids.” He pauses, then asks, “What’s your name? I’ve been watching you for months now and I still haven’t learned who you are.”

Billy feels his lips twitch up in amusement. He’d started his day out not even believing in mermaids, and now apparently there’s a distinct difference between mermaids and sirens, and he just has to accept this is how things are.

“My name’s Billy,” he answers, “Billy Hargrove. And you are?”

The siren grins, revealing a mouth full of sharp, *very* sharp, teeth.

“Steve, just Steve. My parents called me Steven as a child, but I don’t like Steven. So just Steve,” he says, eyes lighting up as if talking to Billy is the highlight of his day.

What an absolute dork.

“Well, Just Steve, it’s been a pleasure to meet you. I have to go home now, but I’ll come back...tomorrow? Yeah, I’ll come back tomorrow,” he says, smiling softly up at Steve. What a remarkably human name, too.

Steve nods, then pulls himself all the way into the water.

“Goodnight, Billy. It was wonderful to finally meet you!”